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ABSTRACT

This report reviews statistical data collected by the New York City (NYC) Board of Education (BOE) and New York State Education Department documenting the rise in school dropout rates among English Language Learners (ELLs) and their unacceptable educational outcomes, incorporating students' comments gathered during focus groups held with NYC high school ELLs in 2001. The report documents the failure of the State Education Department and NYC BOE to provide adequate support and educational intervention services in accordance with established laws and policies to ensure school success for ELLs. Factors associated with increased academic risk for ELLs included failure of schools to provide additional required English classes or have trained, certified ESL and bilingual teachers; lack of ESL curricula tied to new standards; lack of extended day, weekend, and year-round programs for late arriving ELLs and other at-risk ELLs; very high levels of dropouts in certain high schools; poor preparation for high school by many middle schools; and one-size-fits-all graduation standards. Students were often encouraged by school staff to pursue GEDs instead of regular high school diplomas. Key recommendations to improve the education of ELLs, increase graduation rates, and lower dropout rates include increasing school accountability for ensuring that schools succeed and improving ESL instruction. (Contains 58 references and 7 tables.) (SM)

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ED 467 109

Creating A Formula for Success:

Why English Language Learner students are dropping out of school, and how to increase graduation rates

June 2002

Advocates for Children of New York and
The New York Immigration Coalition

UD 035 170

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Executive Summary

The implementation of New York State's new graduation requirements has been an enormous challenge for the thousands of immigrant students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York City's public high schools. The current outcomes for these students as a direct result of these new requirements are extremely disturbing; more ELL children are now dropping out than are graduating high school. Under the new graduation standards, ELLs are required to pass the English Language Arts (ELA) Regents--an exam designed for native-born English speaking children who have been learning English language arts since elementary school. Advocates, parents and students, and teachers and school administrators raised concerns that the new policy, without major improvements in the education provided to ELLs, would result in higher dropout rates. Two advisory committees appointed by Commissioner Mills of the New York State Education Department recommended that alternative assessments or a safety net be provided to ELLs. Commissioner Mills rejected the recommendations and the ELA Regents requirement was implemented beginning in June 2000. This report analyzes the educational outcomes of ELLs since the implementation of the new standards, and assesses the implementation of promised improvements in the education provided to ELLs. The report also incorporates students' voices on these topics from focus groups conducted by Advocates for Children. Last, the report includes recommendations for an agenda to increase graduate rates and lower dropout rates which we believe can serve as a blueprint for Mayor Bloomberg, Chancellor Levy, and state policy makers.

A. Educational Outcomes for ELLs – Key Findings

A recently issued report on the four year educational outcomes of the Class of 2001 by the New York City (NYC) Board of Education (BOE) presents two strikingly different pictures for ELLs predicated on whether or not they became proficient in English before they completed

high school. The educational outcomes on these students based on data for the Class of 2001 (and previous reports) demonstrate:

Former ELLs Outperform All Students:

- Former ELLs had the highest graduation rates and the lowest dropout rates of all students. Over 58% of former ELLs graduated within four years and slightly over 15% dropped out, as compared to English proficient students of whom 52.6% graduated in four years and 19.6% dropped out.

Current ELLs had the highest dropout rates and lowest graduation rates:

- ELLs who did not have the time or additional help needed to become proficient in English and remained ELLs were at high risk for academic failure, including dropping out of school and being pushed into GED programs. Over 31% of ELLs dropped out within four years, surpassing the number of ELLs that graduated within four years, and nearly 40% were still in school. Many current ELLs are late entrants into the NYC public schools, having first enrolled in 6th through 12th grade, some with an interrupted formal education in their native country. The dropout rate for current ELLs in the Class of 2001 will reach 50%.

- As the BOE's report on the seven year outcomes of the Class of 1998 demonstrates, half of students who remain in school after four years will eventually graduate (many with GED's) and the other half will drop out. (Class of 1998 students did not have to pass Regents exams.) Consequently, it can be projected that the final dropout rate for ELLs in the Class of 2001 will reach 50%. In comparison, the final graduation rate for former ELLs in the Class of 2001 will approach 73%.

Drop Out Rates Are Rising Steadily:

- For the second year in a row, the dropout rate for ELLs exceeded the rate of ELLs who graduated in the same amount of time: 31.7% vs. 31.3% for the Class of 2001 and 30.6% vs. 30.3% for the Class of 2002. Furthermore, ELLs in the Classes of 2000 and 2001 were almost twice as likely to dropout than ELLs in the Classes of 1997 and 1998.

ELLs are being encouraged to leave high school and take the GED:

- During our focus groups with ELL students, participants indicated that they were often encouraged by school staff to pursue a GED instead of a regular high school diploma, which has inherent dangers for their future careers and for possible higher learning.

ELLs in middle school are not prepared for high school:

- Only 2.9% of the ELLs who took the Grade 8 ELA in 2001 met or exceeded standards. The corresponding rate for English Proficient (EP) students was 35.4%. A substantial majority of ELLs (67.4%) scored below basic proficiency (Level 1) in contrast with only 19.6% of EP students. These same ELL students who did not meet basic proficiency on the Grade 8 ELA in 2001 (67.4%) are required in 2004 to take and the Regents ELA Exam in order to graduate in 2005.

These educational outcomes for ELLs provide clear and convincing evidence of two

facts. First, that the implementation of the new standards has resulted in unacceptably high dropout rates for ELLs who have not had the time or additional help needed to meet the standards. The fact that over 31% of ELLs dropped out within four years is incontrovertible, even more frightening is that the projected final dropout rate for ELLs in the Class of 2001 will reach 50%. Based on the low performance of current ELLs in middle schools and the additional graduation requirements being phased in, without targeted improvements in the education of ELLs, the dropout rates will continue to escalate. Second, bilingual and ESL programs prepared thousands of ELLs (and now former ELLs) to graduate on time. Former ELLs actually had the highest graduation rates for all NYC public school students. This is evidence that many schools have provided quality bilingual and ESL programs for ELLs.

B. Assessment of the Implementation of Promised Improvements in the Education of ELLs

In adopting the new graduation requirements, the Board of Regents recognized that significant improvements and enhancements in the education provided to ELLs were needed. The Regents adopted a 12 Step Action Plan (prepared by the State Education Department) and required school districts to implement the plan. The major components of the plan and an assessment of the implementation are as follows:

- **Provide intensive English language instruction:** The Regents adopted new regulations doubling and tripling the amount of ESL instruction schools needed to provide ELLs. SED monitoring reports found that more than one half of schools in NYC were not in compliance with the requirement and that many schools were using uncertified and untrained teachers. Futhermore, there still is no curriculum in place for ESL teachers to use to prepare ELLs for the ELA standards.
- **Provide an extended school day and year:** No new funding was provided to school districts to provide an extended school day or school year for ELLs. Some schools are using federal or state funding to provide these programs, but many schools are not. For example, the State Education department is able to fund only one in five requests for extended day programs. In addition, ELLs in summer school often did not receive appropriate ESL or bilingual instruction and due to budget cuts, Saturday ESL classes were eliminated this year.
- **Provide professional development:** Expansion of professional development activities is needed. The state has funded a number of Bilingual/ESL Staff Academies for Raising Standards (BESARS). These academies provide critically needed training to bilingual, ESL and ELA teachers to assist ELLs to meet the standards. However, the program is not available in elementary schools and only in a limited number of middle schools. While some professional development has been provided in high schools, little follow-up and continued in-service training has been provided.
- **Encourage certified teachers to teach ELLs:** Little or no progress has been made in increasing the number of certified ESL or bilingual teachers. Fifty-nine percent of ESL and bilingual teachers in NYC are uncertified or are approaching retirement age- the largest shortage of all teachers in NYC. The BOE estimates that 3600 new bilingual and ESL teachers are needed. ESL is currently taught by too many teachers without any training in how to assist ELLs to learn English and meet the ELA standards.

- **Communicate effectively with parents:** As nearly one half of families in NYC speak a language other than English at home, the need for school documents to be translated into different languages and to provide interpreters for school meetings is critical. The BOE has adopted a new policy to improve communications with non-English speaking parents, but it has yet to be implemented.

C. Conclusion

The educational outcome data for ELLs indicates that though some ELLs are succeeding under the new standards, too many are dropping out or being pushed out of high school. Based on the fact that middle schools are doing a very poor job in preparing current ELLs to meet both ELA and math standards, there is a very strong likelihood of even higher drop out rates for ELLs in the future. Furthermore, the improvements and enhancements to the education mandated by the Board of Regents have not been implemented comprehensively, and too many ELLs are being taught by uncertified, under-trained teachers, and are not receiving the additional help they are entitled to and need to succeed.

The data from the BOE and our analysis lay out the factors associated with increased academic risk for ELLs. These factors include: the failure of too many schools to provide additional required English classes or to have trained and certified ESL and bilingual teachers; the lack of an ESL curriculum tied to the new standards; the lack of extended day, weekend and year round programs for late arriving ELLs and other at-risk ELLs; very high levels of dropouts in certain high schools; poor preparation for high school by many middle schools; and a "one size fits all" graduation standard which does not recognize the unique needs of late arriving and over-age ELLs.

The challenge for policymakers is to go beyond a "one size fits all" approach in both setting the standards and in developing strategies to ensure that all children can succeed. Clearly, gaining proficiency in English is critically important for ELLs, and major improvements are needed in the quality of ESL instruction. But focusing only on English proficiency, without providing an extended school day, weekend and year round classes, will result in ELLs falling behind in other core subjects and not being able to pass required Regents exams in math, science and social studies. Policymakers must also learn from the success stories of ELLs—from the successes of former ELLs and from current ELLs who were able to meet the standards.

The fact that former ELLs have the highest graduation rates and lowest drop out rates of all students in the public school system and the fact that over 30% of ELLs who are not academically proficient in English were still able to meet the ELA requirement and graduate on time, is testament to the fact that many programs are working. Eliminating bilingual education or limiting the time ELLs can receive ESL instruction will jeopardize the positive progress that has been made. A targeted approach based on the needs of the ELLs who are not succeeding now, focused on schools in which ELLs are under-performing is needed. New federal Title I funds and increased state funding provide the resources needed to implement this new approach. Furthermore, reducing the number of students who need six or seven years to complete school, will save the school system millions of dollars that can be invested in further improvements in the school system. The following recommendations provide a blueprint for an agenda to ensure that all ELLs can and will succeed.

Key Recommendations to Increasing Graduation Rates for ELLs

1. **Increase school accountability for ensuring that schools succeed: Target middle and high schools in which ELLs are under-performing and implement a "Comstat" approach to improving ELL education.** The NYC BOE must focus on schools failing to educate ELLs properly. They should target all middle and high schools in which ELL educational outcomes are below acceptable levels, provide central board oversight and increase accountability for improvements in educational outcomes for ELLs. It is critical to assist ELLs currently in high schools to meet the standards, but at the same time we need to address the shortcomings of too many middle schools. To pass Regents exams in English and all other core subjects, ELLs must begin high school better prepared. All schools in which ELLs are under-performing must have certified and experienced teachers assigned to them, a longer school day and expanded professional development through an Intensive Summer Teacher Institute.

2. **Implement new strategies to assist ELLs most at risk of dropping out—the diverse needs of late-arriving and over-age ELLs must be addressed.** ELLs most at risk in high schools are late-arriving students and over-age ELLs, regardless if schools are high performing or low performing. Different strategies are needed based on their diverse needs. An ELL who enrolls in NYC schools at age 13-16 as a "student with an interrupted formal education" (SIFE), has very different needs than an ELL who arrives at the same age with a strong educational background. For the latter, an accelerated English acquisition program may be appropriate, while for the former, an extended day, weekend and year round classes using bilingual education combined with ESL instruction may be appropriate. Pushing these students out of high schools is not an acceptable response.

3. **Improve ESL instruction.** It is critically important that curriculum be developed that relates ESL instruction to the new standards and teachers be trained to use the new curriculum. There is no benefit to ELLs in sitting in two or three ESL classes per day, if teachers are using the most basic curriculum even for students who have gained intermediate English skills and are ready to incorporate the new core curricular standards. The ESL curriculum must be tied to the English language arts standards for which students are being held accountable. The BOE is currently piloting a new approach to ESL, an accelerated academic English model program. Under this model, well-trained certified teachers provide content rich instruction using ESL and students also receive extended day and weekend instruction to support learning during the regular school day. These programs should be expanded throughout NYC schools.

4. **Increase the number of Certified Teachers.** To improve ELL's academic proficiency in English, the BOE must increase the number of certified teachers teaching ESL and bilingual classes. This constitutes one of the longest standing and largest shortage areas in the NYC school system. At least 3,600 teachers are currently needed in this area. The Teachers for Tomorrow program has not addressed the systemic shortage of certified ESL and bilingual teachers, and new approaches

including additional pay and other incentives must be put into place.

5. **Improve core subject instruction for ELLs**. In addition to passing an ELA Regents, ELLs soon must be able to pass Regents exams in math, science and social studies to graduate. The shortage of certified bilingual teachers in the core subjects must be remedied or these students will not be able to pass the new Regents exams. Expanded professional development in ESL methodologies for English-only speaking core subject teachers is needed so that ELLs who are not in bilingual classes do not fall behind in core subjects as they become academically proficient in English.

6. **Maintain high standards for ELLs, but develop alternative assessments to the ELA Regents requirement for late arrival ELLs**. Late entrant ELLs who meet all core subject requirements, but have not had the time to become academically proficient in English, should not be forced to remain in high school until they can pass an ELA Regents exam designed for native born English speakers who have been studying English language arts since kindergarten. These students should be able to graduate high school with a local diploma by passing an English proficiency test based on the number of years they have been in ESL classes and by demonstrating language arts proficiency in their native language.

7. **Implement a comprehensive language access policy for the parents of ELLs**. Research clearly shows that parent involvement in their children's education results in improved educational outcomes. However, for parents of ELLs, the lack of a comprehensive policy to translate school documents and provide interpreters for school meetings prevents their active participation in their children's schools. The BOE recently adopted a language access policy but due to the lack of resources, it has not been implemented. Funding is needed to ensure its implementation in all schools. In addition, investing in family literacy and adult ESL classes while their children are attending weekend ESL classes will also enable parents to be more actively engaged in their children's education.

Part I

Introduction

"Dropout rates increase as students are required to pass Regents examination to graduate"

NYC BOE, 2002[1]

Immigrants and their children make up a large and growing percentage of NYC's population. While not all English Language Learners (ELLs) are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and not all immigrants and/or their children require assistance in learning English, the size and diversity of New York's immigrant and refugee communities create more demand for English language instruction in schools. Sadly, the NYC school system is failing these students. Children whose native language is not English continue to have their basic educational needs overlooked, and as a result, they are seriously underserved in NYC schools.

There were 151, 530 English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled in the NYC public schools during the 2000-2001 school year, constituting approximately 14% of the overall student population.[2] The majority of these students (n=92,484) were enrolled in general education placements in elementary or intermediate schools which included students who were receiving special education support services in a general education class. An additional 38,645 students were enrolled in general education placements in high schools (grades 9-12).[3] The remaining 20,401 ELLs attended self-contained special education programs.

Of the 140 languages spoken by ELLs, the predominant language was Spanish (64%), followed by Chinese (10.8%), Russian (3.2%), Haitian (3.1%), Urdu (2.7%) Bengali (2.6%),

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[1] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Report. (April 24, 2002). NYC BOE, (p.4).
[2] Facts & Figures (2000-2001): Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About English Language Learners (ELLs) and bilingual/ESL programs, NYC BOE, Office of English Language Learners, (p.3).
[3] The highest proportion of high school ELLs were attending schools in Queens (11,180), 10,569 were in Brooklyn, 8,960 were in Manhattan, 7,278 were in the Bronx, and 658 were in Staten Island. (Id. at 4).

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Korean (1.8%), Arabic (1.8%), Punjabi (1.2%), Albanian (1.2%), and French (1.1). These languages account for 95% of all ELLs.[4]

Data on the school outcomes for ELLs during the past few years document their high risk for academic failure, including dropping out of school. The barriers that prevent ELLs from experiencing school success are clear, particularly with regard to the new statewide learning standards, which have been implemented during the last few years. It is irrefutable that the implementation of the new standards for ELLs has been faulty and that more supports and services need to be implemented if these students are to succeed in school. The formula for failure that currently guides the educational experiences of ELLs is in grave need of change.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of statistical data collected and maintained by the NYC BOE and New York State Education Department documenting the rise in school dropout rates among ELLs and their unacceptable educational outcomes. In addition to city and state data, this report also incorporates students' voices on these topics. Their comments were gathered during several focus groups that Advocates for Children held with high school ELLs in NYC programs in November and December of 2001. This report also documents the failure of the State Education Department and the NYC BOE to provide adequate support services and educational intervention services in accordance with established laws and policies to ensure the school success of ELLs. Last, this report includes key recommendations to improve the education of ELLs and increase graduate rates and lower dropout rates which we believe can serve as a blueprint for Mayor Bloomberg, Chancellor Levy, and other key education policy makers.

[4] Id. at 5.

Part II

The Rise in High School Dropout Rates Among ELLs

ELLs are dropping out of the NYC school system at intolerably high rates. This section of the report illustrates the number of ELLs in high school who are experiencing systematic and disproportionate educational failure by focusing on (a) the Class of 2001 (i.e., students who began 9th grade in 1997 and were scheduled to graduate on time by summer 2001 after four years of high school),[5] and (b) the Class of 2000 (i.e., students who began 9th grade in 1996 and were scheduled to graduate on time by summer 2000 after four years of high school).[6] Additional data, based on the Classes of 1998[7] and 1997,[8] is used to portray the ongoing crisis of high dropout rates for ELLs. Data from all these classes highlights the desperate need for timely and adequate support services to enable ELLs to experience school success.

A. A Substantial Proportion of High School Students in the Class of 2001 were ELLs[9]

Of the 65,727 students in the Class of 2001 (students who entered 9th grade in the fall of 1997), 14.1% (9,270) were ELLs,[10] 22.9% (15,060) were former ELLs,[11] and 63.0% (41,397)

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[5] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 2000-01 Event Dropout Rates, March, 2002. NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability.

[6] The Class of 2000 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 1999-00 Event Dropout Rates, 2001. NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability.

[7] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1998 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (March, 2002). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability.

[8] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1997 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (2001). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability.

[9] Related data from the ELL Subcommittee Report (1990-1991 entrants) indicate that 63.6% of the ELLs entered the NYC public schools in kindergarten, 12.4% in Grade 1, and 9.7% in Grade 9.

[10] ELLs are defined as students who spent their high school careers in either bilingual or freestanding ESL programs.

[11] Former ELLs are defined as student who spent part of their high school careers in either bilingual or freestanding ESL programs, but who tested out of the program by the end of their 4th year by scoring above the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB).

were English speakers. [12] This Class Profile, as well as the corresponding data for the Class of 2000, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Class of 2001 and the Class of 2000

	CLASS OF 2001		CLASS OF 2000	
	# of Students	Percentage of Total	# of Students	Percentage of Total
Total # of Students	65,727	100%	67,072	100%
ELLs	9,270	14.1%	9,942	14.8%
Former ELLs	15,060	22.9%	11,638	17.4%
English Speakers	41,397	63.0%	45,492	67.8%

B. A Substantial Proportion of ELLs in the Class of 2001 had Dropped Out of School Prior to their Scheduled Graduation in Summer of 2001 (31.7%).

This rate far exceeded the dropout rate of 20.4% for all students in the Class of 2001. The NYC BOE's 4-year longitudinal report for the Class of 2001 depicts a disturbing profile of ELLs who were scheduled to graduate on time by summer 2001 after four years of high school. Table 2 presents the dropout rate and the graduation rate (after four years of high school) for (a) the Class of 2001, and (b) the Class of 2000.

[12] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 2000-01 Event Dropout Rates, (March, 2002). NYC BOE Division of Assessment and Accountability, (p.i).

Table 2: Dropout and Graduation Rates: Class of 2001 vs. Class of 2000[13]

	CLASS OF 2001			CLASS OF 2000		
	# of Students	Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate	# of Students	Dropout Rate	Graduation Rate
Total	65,727	20.4%	51.0%	67,072	19.3%	49.9%
ELLs	9,270	31.7%	31.3%	9,942	30.6%	30.3%
Former ELLs	15,060	15.4%	58.6%	11,638	14.1%	58.2%
English Speakers	41,397	19.6%	52.5%	45,492	18.2%	52.1%

The data presented in Table 2 (above) is disturbing for a variety of reasons:

- Almost one-third (31.7%) of the ELLs who were scheduled to graduate by summer 2001 had dropped out of high school.
- The dropout rate for ELLs in the Class of 2001 (31.7%) is far worse than the dropout rate of former ELLs (15.4%), as well as for English Proficient students (19.6%), and for the overall student population (20.4%).
- The dropout rate for ELLs in the Class of 2001 is higher than the corresponding rate for ELLs in the Class of 2000 (31.7% vs. 30.6%).
- The four-year graduation rate for ELLs in the Class of 2001 (31.3%) was substantially lower than the graduation rate of 51.0% for the overall student population, former ELLs (58.6%), as well as for English Proficient students (52.5%).
- Although the graduation rate of 51% for the Class of 2001 is slightly higher than the corresponding rate for the Class of 2000 (49.9%) and the class of 1999 (50.1%),[14] it nonetheless indicates that only half of the students manage to graduate in four years.

[13] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Report. (April 24, 2002). NYC BOE, (p.8).

C. The Dropout Rates for ELLs are Increasing.

Some alarming findings emerge when the final outcomes for the Class of 1998 are examined. Statistical data from the Final Longitudinal Report for the Class of 1998 suggests that the dropout rate for ELLs is getting progressively worse. The Longitudinal Report provides summary statistics on the final outcomes for the Class of 1998 three years after their scheduled graduation date (summer, 2001).[15] In contrast with the data presented above for the Class of 2001 and the Class of 2000 whereby data was presented for both ELLs (students who spent their high school careers in either bilingual or free standing ESL Programs) and Former ELLs (students who spent part of their high school careers in either bilingual or free-standing ESL Programs, but who tested out of the program prior to the end of their 4th year), final outcomes for the Class of 1998 define ELLs as being eligible for bilingual or free-standing ESL services at some time during their high school careers. In other words, data for the Class of 1998 does not distinguish between students who never tested out of Bilingual/ESL Programs (ELLs) and those who did test out by scoring above the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (Former ELLs).

Table 3 presents the final outcomes for the Class of 1998 released by the NYC BOE in March 2002. [16] The first column lists the proportion of students who dropped out of school (a) prior to their expected graduation in the summer of 1998 after four years of high school, and (b) at the time of final follow-up in the summer of 2001 – three years after their expected graduation date. The second column lists the proportion of students who graduated (a) on time after four years of high school, (b) after 5 years of high school, (c) after 6 years of high school, and (d) at

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[14] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Report. (April 24, 2002). NYC BOE, (p.5).
[15] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1998 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (March 2002). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability.
[16] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1998 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (March 2002). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability, (p.10).

the time of final follow-up in the summer of 2001 -- three years after their expected graduation date.

Table 3: Final Data on Dropout Rates and Graduation Rates: Class of 1998

	PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO DROPPED OUT		PROPORTION OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED			
	4 Yrs	Final (7yrs)	4 Yrs (on time)	5 Yrs	6 Yrs	Final (7 yrs)
ELLs	16.8	39.1	37.7	53.2	58.4	60.9
English Proficient	13.1	28.9	52.1	64.0	68.3	71.1
All Students	13.7	30.5	49.8	62.2	66.7	69.5

The data presented in Table 3 (above) also paints a dismal picture of school success for ELLs and clearly indicates that something must finally be done to ensure school success for ELLs --- regardless of how they are defined.

- The proportion of ELLs in the Class of 1998 who had dropped out of school prior to their expected graduation date (16.8%) was higher than the dropout rate of 13.7% for the overall student population, as well as for English Proficient students (13.1%).
- The final dropout statistics for the Class of 1998 indicate that the proportion of ELLs who dropped out of school (39.1%) was higher than the dropout rate of 30.5% for the overall student population, as well as for English Proficient students (28.9%).
- ELLs are not only less likely to graduate on time (37.7%) in comparison to the overall student population (49.8%) and to English Proficient students (52.1%), but also, they are less likely to ever graduate from high school (60.9% vs. 69.5% and 71.1%).
- Less than half of ELLs who remained in school for more than four years ended up

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graduating high school—more than half dropped out. Extrapolating this data to the four year outcomes for ELLs in the Class of 2001 means that the final dropout rate for ELLs will exceed 50%.

D. The Dropout Rates for ELLs are Increasing More Sharply than the Dropout Rates for Other Groups of Students

As mentioned above, for both the Class of 2001 and the Class of 2000, dropout statistics were presented for (a) ELLs and (b) Former ELLs. In each case, the dropout rate for ELLs was substantially higher than for former ELLs. In addition, the graduation rate for ELLs was substantially lower than for former ELLs. Data for the Class of 1998 and the Class of 1997, in contrast, does not distinguish between these two groups. Instead, the term ELL included students who never tested out of bilingual/free-standing ESL programs in high school (ELLs in the Class of 2001) and those who did (Former ELLs in the Class of 2001). For these reasons, comparisons over time are difficult to make. Given the higher rates of school success for Former ELLs than for ELLs, however, it is reasonable to speculate that the dropout data for ELLs in the Class of 1998 and the Class of 1997 would be lower (not higher) if former ELLs were <u>not</u> included in the definition of ELL. It is also reasonable to speculate that the graduation data for ELLs in the Class of 1998 and the Class of 1997 would be higher (not lower) if former ELLs were <u>not</u> included in the definition of ELL.

Table 4 presents the dropout and graduation rates for ELLs in the Class of 2001 and 2000. Comparison data is also presented for students in the Class of 1998 and the Class of 1997. In addition to the four year dropout and graduation rates for each of these student groups, the proportion of students who ever graduated is presented for students in the Class of 1998 and the Class of 1997.

Table 4: Dropout and Graduation Rates for four cohorts of ELLs:

2001, 2000, 1998, and 1997

	Class of 2001		Class of 2000		Class of 1998	Class of 1997
	ELL	Former ELL	ELL	Former ELL	ELL	ELL
Dropout Rate	31.7	15.4	30.6	14.1	16.8	15.9
Graduated on time	31.3	58.6	30.3	58.2	37.7	40.8
Ever Graduated	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	60.9	64.2

Note: N/A indicates that these data are not yet available. Final dates for the Class of 2001 is 3 years after expected date of graduation (i.e., 2004). However, if we extrapolate the seven year outcomes from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 to the Classes of 2000 and 2001, the "ever graduated" rates for ELLs would be less than 50% and for former ELLs it would exceed 70%.

This data indicates that:

- ELLs in the Class of 2001 were almost twice as likely to dropout than ELLs in the Class of 1997 (31.7 vs. 15.9%) and the Class of 1998 (31.7 vs. 16.8).
- ELLs in the Class of 2001 were less likely to graduate on time than ELLs in the Class of 1997 (31.3 vs. 40.8) and the Class of 1998 (31.3 vs. 37.7).
- ELLs in the Class of 2000 were almost twice as likely to dropout than ELLs in the Class of 1997 (30.6 vs. 15.9%) and the Class of 1998 (30.6 vs. 16.8).
- ELLs in the Class of 2000 were less likely to graduate on time than ELLs in the Class of 1997 (30.3 vs. 40.8) and the Class of 1998 (30.3 vs. 37.7).

E. The General Equivalency Diploma (GED) is a Poor Substitute for a High School Diploma

Compounding the disturbingly low proportion of students who graduate from the NYC public schools is the fact that many of the students defined as "graduates" have received only a

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General Equivalency Diploma (GED). The GED is not a strong alternative to graduation from high school. Students with a GED generally earn considerably less salary, are more likely to be unemployed, and are more likely to be on public assistance.[17] In addition, only 2% of GED holders obtain their Bachelor's Degree after obtaining entry into college.[18]

Overall, 4.1% of the Class of 2001 were GED recipients (vs. 4.2% of the Class of 2000 and 4.1% of the Class of 1999).[19] A second way of examining the proportion of GED recipients is to focus on only those students who graduated from High School after four years and to compare the proportion of students who graduated with a GED vs. those who graduated with a Local High School Diploma, a Regents-Endorsed Diploma, a Regents-Endorsed Diploma with Honors, and a Special Education Diploma or Certificate. This data is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Types of Diplomas Earned by the Classes of 1998-2001[20]

	1998	1999	2000	2001
% of Graduates with a Local High School Diploma	66.0	64.8	61.0	59.9
% of Graduates with a Regents-Endorsed Diploma	19.0	19.6	24.0	25.7
% of Graduates with a Regents-Endorsed Diploma (with Honors)	6.9	7.1	6.0	5.9
% of Graduates with a Special Education Diploma or Certificate	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.5
% of Graduates with a GED	7.7	8.1	8.5	8.1

A final indication of the unacceptable level of graduates who receive only a GED is the number of students who ever graduated from High School and to compare the types of degrees received. This data is presented in Table 6 for (a) the Class of 1998, and (b) the Class of 1997.

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[17] Alianza Dominicana et al. v. NYSED et al Alianza Dominicana, Inc., New York Immigration Coalition, South Asian Youth Action! vs. New York State, (10/16/00 Amended Complaint), p. 26.
[18] Id.
[19] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Graduation and Dropout Report. (April 24, 2002). NYC BOE, (p.5).
[20] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 2000-01 Event Dropout Rates, March, 2002. NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability, (p.10).

Table 6: Types of Diplomas (after 7 years) Earned by the Classes of 1998 and 1997

	1998[21]	1997[22]
Overall Proportion of Graduates (after 7years of High School)	69.5	69.7
% of Graduates with a Local High School Diploma	64.5	66.7
% of Graduates with a Regents-Endorsed Diploma	14.6	13.9
% of Graduates with a Regents-Endorsed Diploma (with Honors)	5.2	4.0
% of Graduates with a Special Education Diploma or Certificate	0.5	0.5
% of Graduates with a GED	15.1	14.9

The data presented in Tables 5 and 6 indicates that approximately 8% of the students who graduate on time and approximately 15% of those who ever graduate are GED recipients. During our focus groups with students who were ELLs and who had dropped out of school, participants indicated that they were often encouraged by school staff to pursue a GED instead of a regular high school diploma and that they were not aware of other options for high school completion.

- *"My school was only to the ninth grade and I was already 18 so they told me to get a GED. I didn't know how to transfer to another school, so I left."* [Male, 19]
- *"It is very important to have a high school diploma and I don't want to be 20 in high school. They make it look like a GED is a faster way to graduate"* [Male, 20]
- *"I fell behind in my work and the way they talked about the GED it just seemed like I could get a diploma faster."* [Female, 20]
- *"I only had twenty credits and was not going to graduate on time. She [the school counselor] encouraged me to get a GED. I tried to stay on top of my schoolwork, but I was tired from work and could not keep up. My counselor repeated that I should go for a GED, and I gave up."* [Male, 19]

[21] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1998 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (March, 20002). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability. (p.5).
[22] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1997 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, (2001). NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability. (p.5)

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- *"My grades had dropped and the counselor suggested I take the GED. All my teachers told me it was the best thing to do. They made me feel like they didn't want me around and I felt there was no other hope than to get a GED."* [Male, 18]

- *"They made me feel like I had no other choice but to go for a GED. Afterwards, when I come here I realize I did; nobody explained what choices I had."* [Female, 19]

- *"I didn't admire kids who were 20 and were still in high school. I didn't want to be 20 in high school so they suggested I go for a GED. Now I realize I really want to learn and I want to return to school even if I am 20."* [Female, 20]

- *"My problems started in JHS and a counselor there helped me so much. She really took care of me, and called me at home, she even bought me clothes so I could come to school. It was because of her that I made it through JHS. Nobody in high school took interest in me, helped me. I was told you don't have enough credits, sign here and go get a GED." [Female, 17]*

F. Summary and Discussion

The data presented in this review of dropout rates for ELLs in NYC exposes a disturbing picture. The overall graduation rate for all NYC students is low, but is much worse for ELLs—particularly for ELLs who do not become proficient in English. As noted above, only 51.0% of the students in the Class of 2001 and only 49.9% of students in the Class of 2000 graduated on time. The corresponding rates for ELLs were 31.3% and 30.3%. While the profile for the entire student population, as well as for ELLs after seven years of high school is slightly better than the profile after four years, the profile is shocking nonetheless. Overall, 69.5% of the students in the Class of 1998 ever graduated from high school, the corresponding rate for ELLs was 60.9%. This troubling profile is also unmistakable when the final graduation rates for students in the Class of 1993 through 1997 are examined. This data indicates that even when students attend high school in NYC for seven years, only 65% of ELLs graduate in contrast with approximately 71% of English Proficient students (1993: 65.7% vs. 71.6%; 1994: 65.8% vs. 71.7%; 1995: 64.3% vs.

71.2%; 1996: 65.0% vs. 70.3%; 1997: 64.2% vs. 70.8%).[23] Furthermore, as noted previously, when the educational outcomes for former ELLs are not included, the graduation rate for ELLs who do not become proficient is much lower. For the Class of 2001, the final dropout rate for ELLs will exceed 50%. The bottom line is that ELLs lagged behind English proficient students prior to the implementation of the new graduation standards in 2000, and that the gap has grown significantly. Without major improvements in the education provided to ELLs, the numbers of ELLs graduating with high school diplomas will continue to decline and dropout rates and GED's will increase.

The following section of this report (Part III) discusses the updated graduation requirements for NYC students, the disappointing results for high school ELLs on the Regents English Language Arts (ELA) examination, and how these two factors are placing ELLs at an increased risk for dropping out of high school. Part IV of the report identifies additional factors leading to the increased risk of school failure confronting ELLs. Part V discusses the inadequacy of support services provided to ELLs to prevent academic failure and to promote school success.

[23] Assessment/Accountability Report: The Class of 1997 Final Longitudinal Report: A Three-Year Follow-up Study, NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability (p.14).

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Part III

The Impact of Higher Standards and Academic Failure on ELL Dropout Rates

A. The New Graduation Requirements for High School Students

In 1996, the New York State Board of Regents substantially revised the requirements for graduation from the NYC public schools. The new policy imposed a new set of standards and examinations that were required for graduation beginning in 2000. Prior to these changes, students could graduate with 40 credits and a select core of curriculum credits. They could also pass Regents Competency Tests and receive a Local Diploma as an alternative to taking Regents exams and receiving a Regents-Endorsed Diploma.[24] To receive a Local Diploma, students were required to demonstrate competence in reading, math, science, global studies and United States history by passing less rigorous Regents Competency Tests (RCTs). Students who were not English proficient could graduate by passing the reading sub-test of the English Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and the translated versions of the RCTs. Finally, students in special education classes could receive an IEP diploma if they had met the educational goal in their most recent educational program and had completed 12 years of schooling.

In September 1999, the NYC BOE approved a new promotion policy that established new criteria for graduation and promotion, in part in reaction to the new statewide standards. Chancellor's Regulation A-501 *"Promotion Standards"* (CR-A-501), which implemented the Board's promotion policy, was issued by then-Chancellor Crew shortly thereafter (October 14, 1999), and became effective immediately. To accomplish the Chancellor's goal of higher

[24] There are modified graduation requirements for ELLs who entered the United States in 9th grade or later. Such students may take other required Regents (other than English Language Arts) examinations in their native languages where available if the exam in taken within 3 years of entering the United States. The other required Regents examinations are currently available in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Haitian-Creole, and Korean. ELLs who speak languages other than these do not have this option. Instead, these students must take the exam in English.

academic and promotion standards for NYC's public school students, the new promotion policy (codified in Chancellor's Regulation A-501) significantly revised existing policy. According to CR-A-501, the revised promotion policy was designed to address five major educational goals:

(a) the implementation of rigorous academic and promotion standards,

(b) ongoing student assessment to monitor student progress,

(c) provision of supports and interventions to help students achieve the required standards,

(d) professional development to help school personnel to effectively help students meet the required standards, and

(e) involvement of the entire school community to create and support effective strategies for improved student achievement.

Academic standards for high school graduation were substantially revised by the new State and City policy, and are now significantly more stringent than in previous years. New York State's new graduation requirements require that high school students, including ELLs, pass five Regents subject examinations to receive a high school diploma. The five subjects include English, Mathematics, Global Studies, United States History and Government, and Science. For the first time, in June 2000, all students in the class of 2000 (those who entered 9th grade in 1996) were required to pass the English Language Arts Regents exam in order to graduate,[25] regardless of how long they had been in the United States, their level of English proficiency, or the

[25] This exam was mandatory for all students (except select special education students). This test is designed for students who have been studying English language arts since elementary school, yet, ELLs, who by definition are not proficient in English, were expected to pass this exam in order to graduate. It is also important to note that among those expected to pass this exam to graduate are the tens of thousands of students in city schools who were ELLs, but who exited out of that status without being fully fluent in English. *Immigrant and Refugee Students: How the NYC School System Fails Them and How to Make it Work*, New York Immigration Coalition, June 1999.

educational services that they had received.[26] The additional Regents Exams are being phased in gradually by 2004. In addition to the new graduation requirements, students are now also required to accumulate 40 credits, including 8 credits in English, 8 credits in Social Studies, 6 credits in Science, 6 credits in Mathematics, 2 credits in Second Language, 1 credit in Health Education, 1 credit in Art, 1 credit in Music, and completion of Physical Education requirements.[27] The following summary provides a brief review of the graduation requirements for students in the Class of 2000 through the Class of 2004.

- Class of 2000: Pass the English Regents Exam with a score of 55.
- Class of 2001: Pass the English Regents Exam with a score of 55 and the new Math Regents exam with a score of 55.
- Class of 2002: Pass the English and Math Regents Exams (score of 55) and United States History and Global Studies (score of 55).
- Class of 2003: Pass the English, Math, United States History and Global Studies Exams (score of 55) and the Science exam (score of 55).
- Class of 2004: Pass all five exams with a score of 55.
- Class of 2005: Pass all five exams with a score of 65.

In summary, the graduation standards are now significantly higher since this change in policy. The revised promotion policy recognized the importance of early identification, a comprehensive and expanded program of student support services, and effective interventions to address the educational needs of students at risk of failure.[28] The new requirements for high

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[26] Prior to the 1999-2000 academic year, few ELLs took the English Language Arts Regents. For example, only 10% (n=1,213) of eligible ELLs took the English Language Arts Regents in 1998. Of these, only 265 passed the exam. This means that ELLs were five times less likely to take the English Regents than their general education counterparts, and in the few cases where they did, they were three times more likely to fail the exam.

[27] 44 credits for students entering high school class of 2001 and including four credits in Physical Education.

[28] *"The delivery of a comprehensive, coordinated, and expanded program of student support services is vital to the total educational experience of students as they work toward meeting high promotion standards... The Pupil*

school graduation were also accompanied by a mandate for schools to provide continued support and instruction in day, evening, and summer school.[29] Ironically, however, because summer school is technically only for students "at risk" of retention, ELLs who have been in the United States for less than two years (and therefore are not subject to the promotion policy and cannot be held back) are not eligible for summer school services under the promotion and graduation policy. Although the BOE passed a policy resolution on February 27, 2001 requiring expanded after school and summer school English instruction for at-risk ELLs, the City and Board have largely failed to fund and provide these services.

B. Poor Rates of Achievement on the English Regents Examination

The Class of 2000 was the first class that was required to pass the Regents English Language Arts (ELA) Exam to graduate. Although a much greater number of ELLs took the Regents English examination in January 1999 than during prior administrations, it is noteworthy that the majority of eligible ELLs had <u>not</u> yet attempted the Regents English examination at that time. This indicator of risk for failure among ELLs was recognized early by NYC BOE: *"Greater numbers of ELLs than ever before are taking the English Regents examination. Nevertheless, there are many ELLs who are in danger of not meeting the new graduation standards."* [30]

An analysis of the performance of the Class of 2000 on the ELA Exam in January 1999 depicts a disturbing profile of the school success for ELLs in this class and indicates an inability to meet the revised graduation requirements mandated by the revised standards. This inability

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Personnel Team in each school will be organized so that appropriate staff provide the supports necessary for all students to reach the higher standards, particularly those at risk of retention." CR A-501 Section 2 (p.5).

[29] *"Students who fail to meet high school graduation requirements may receive continued support and instruction in day, evening, and summer school through the end of the school year in which their twenty-first birthday occurs."* CR A-501, Section 7.8.

[30] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000 (p.9).

may be associated with the increased school dropout rate for ELLs.[31] The academic achievement on the English Regents Examination (ELA) of the 3,806 General Education ELLs who took the exam indicates that only 36% received a passing grade (scoring 55 or higher),[32] in contrast with 75% of English Proficient (EP) students. In addition, only 12.8% of ELLs received a score of 65 or higher --- the score necessary to graduate in a few years --- in contrast with 54% of English Proficient (EP) students.[33] An additional 28.8% scored less than 40; 11.6% scored between 40-44; 14.1% scored between 45-49; and 9.4% scored between 50-54. ELLs receiving special education services were least likely to score at acceptable levels on the Regents Examination. For example, less than 1% of the 115 ELLs in special education who sat for the comprehensive English Regents Examination in January 1999 scored in the 65-100 range; only 3.5% scored at or above 55. Finally, the overall proportion of ELLs scoring 65-100 varied substantially by grade level and included 7.4% of the 68 9th graders, 5.7% of the 811 10th graders, 13% of the 1,866 11th graders, and 20.5% of the 943 12th graders.[34]

More recent data on the class of 2000 also shows great disparity between the performances of ELLs and English speakers on the English Regents examination. According to the BOE, only 50.8% of ELLs in the Class of 2000 scored 55 or higher on the exam after 4 years compared to 75.8% of the overall class. In addition, the majority of ELLs who passed the exam (69.5%) scored between 55 and 64, below the passing score of 65 required for the Class of 2005 and beyond. This percentage of lowest echelon scores is over twice the rate for the overall class, in which 32.8% of students who scored above 55 had scores between 55 and 64. Furthermore,

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[31] ELL Subcommittee Research Studies: Progress Report, Study 5.

[32] Spanish-speaking students fared lower than Russian and Chinese students with a substantially lower proportion of students achieving a passing score of 55 or higher (30% vs. 51% vs. 47%). Students from all other language groups combined achieved a pass rate of 40%.

[33] Complaint in Alianza Dominicana et al. v. NYSED et al Exhibit L.

[34] In addition, the status of English Regents scores in a cohort of 9,456 ELLs in the Class of 2000 indicates that (a) only 39.7% passed the English Regents in 1999 vs. 63.0% of Non-ELLS; (b) 14.4% failed the Regents vs. 6.6% of Non-ELLs; and (c) 45.9% did not take the test yet vs. 30.4% of Non-ELLs [*Status of the class of 2000 Cohort and Results of the English Regents,* available at www.nycenet.edu/daa]

31.2% of ELLs in the Class of 2000 did not take the English Regents examination compared to 17.4% of students in the overall class. Of those who took the test after 4 years, 18% of ELLs failed the test compared to 6.8% of the overall class.[35]

C. Inadequate Accommodations for ELLs on ELA Examination

Several accommodations are made available to ELLs who take the Regents ELA examination. They include an optimum testing environment (e.g., testing room), extended testing time, use of bilingual dictionaries (only for some languages), reading the listening comprehensive passage an additional time, including ESL teachers in team scoring of student papers, and component retesting.[36] In addition, seniors who did not receive a passing grade on the comprehensive English exam on two occasions, but who scored at least 48 on one test, are allowed to take the component retest. These accommodations are largely ineffective, however, because they do not change the fact that ELLs are required to be tested in an area in which they did not receive instruction. Moreover, the cutoff score to qualify for component re-testing is too high to benefit possibly as many as half or more of ELLs who take the test. While the cutoff score is 48, on the January 1999 administration, 40.4% of ELLs scored below 45 and over half, 54.5% scored at 49 or below.[37]

D. Summary and Discussion

In the final analysis, this data clearly confirms that ELLs are unprepared to meet the challenges presented by the revised graduation requirements. They are not only less likely to take

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[35] Making Language Matter: Toward a Research Agenda on English Language Learners (ELLs) and the English Regents Examination: Class of 2000 Cohort English Regents Analysis, November 29, 2001, NYC BOE Division of Assessment and Accountability. The students in this cohort do not include (1) students with disabilities pursuing IEP diplomas, (2) ELLs who arrived in the U.S. after September 1996 and are not literate in their native language, (3) Students who first entered a New York State school after September 1998, (4) Students with disabilities in ungraded programs, (5) students who transferred to another high school, criminal justice facility, or approved alternative high school equivalency preparation program between June 19, 1999 and June 14, 2000, and (5) students who left the U.S. or died between June 19, 1999 and June 14, 2000.

[36] Letter to Jill Chaifetz, Executive Director of AFC, from James Kadamus, State Education Department, 5/10/01

[37] Complaint in Alianza Dominicana et al. v. NYSED et al, Exhibit L.

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the ELA Regents Examination than their general education counterparts, but among those who did take the ELA, they are less likely to pass the examination. In addition, ELLs were substantially less likely to score in the 65-100 range (the range required for all students in the Class of 2005) than were EP students. As the ELA Regents is designed to test the English language arts skills of native born English speakers who have been studying language arts since elementary school, there should be no surprise that ELLs have much less success than English proficient students. Two advisory boards appointed by Commissioner Mills recommended alternative assessments for ELLs for exactly this reason, but Commissioner Mills and the Regents rejected these recommendations. The fact that over 30% of ELLs in the Classes of 2000 and 2001 who were not academically proficient in English were able to meet the ELA standard and graduate on time, is a testament to their hard work and also a recognition that some high schools have improved the way they are teaching English and language arts to ELLs. Clearly, more improvements are needed to improve ELLs outcomes on the ELA Regents, and alternative assessments also are needed for late arriving students who will not have the time to catch up to native English speakers.

Part IV

Other Factors Placing ELLs at Risk for Dropout

A. ELLs Are Disproportionately Behind Academically at Entry to High School

The challenge for students who are seeking to meet the graduation requirements is greater than ever. Students in the Class of 2002 will be required to take and pass Regents examinations in four subjects in order to graduate from high school. They must pass the English and Math Regents Exams (score of 65) and United States History and Global Studies (score of 55). Students in the Class of 2005 will be required to take Regents Examinations in five subjects in order to graduate from high school. In addition, they will be required to pass all five examinations with a score of 65.

Preliminary data on the Grade 8 ELA Assessment suggest that ELLs continue to be at risk of academic failure and that many are unlikely to meet the higher standards unless appropriate support services are immediately implemented.[38] For example, only 2.9% of the ELLs who took the Grade 8 ELA in 2001 met or exceeded standards (levels 3 and 4). The corresponding rate for English Proficient (EP) students was 35.4%. In addition, a substantial majority of ELLs (67.4%) scored below basic proficiency (Level 1) in contrast with only 19.6% of EP students (and 33% for students overall). Thus, it is clear that while the graduation requirements are becoming more demanding, the percentage of ELL students meeting or exceeding standards remains at the same low level on the new grade 8 assessments since they were implemented in 1999. This data is alarming – the same ELL students (if they remain in school) who did not meet basic proficiency on the Grade 8 ELA in 2001 (67.4%) will be required

[38] NYC BOE. Making Language Matter: Toward a Research Agenda on English Language Learners (ELLs) and the English Regents Examination. Class of 2000 Cohort: English Regents Analysis. November 29, 2001.

in 2004 to take and pass (with a score of Level 2 proficiency) the Regents ELA Exam in order to graduate in 2005.

During our focus groups with students, participants frequently discussed how their inability to communicate in English made staying in school a difficult option for them. Some participants described incidents during their high school experience in which they felt embarrassed, alienated, and incompetent, because they could not communicate in English. For some, facing a daily ritual of taunts became the catalyst for leaving high school.

- *"One teacher in particular didn't like the fact I couldn't speak English that good. I avoided him and I'd cut his class because I was tired of him making fun of me. He was a big reason for me dropping out."* [Male, 19]

- *"The teachers didn't like me because I didn't speak English. I understood what the teachers were saying but I couldn't respond and they would get angry at me. It was very hard to go to school. I just stopped going."* [Female, 20]

- *"I never cut class; I never hang out with the bad kids. My problem was English. I spoke no English and everything was in English. I could not do the work. The teachers said I did not belong in their class, but nobody told me where I belong. I was lost."* [Female, 19]

- *"School was very hard for me because I did not speak English too much. I understood the class but I could not answer in English and teachers made me feel stupid. I would cry because I did not want to go to school. In my GED class, the teachers speak both languages and the students can respond in English or Spanish. Why can't high school be like that?"* [Female, 19]

B. ELLs Are Disproportionately Over Age for Grade

Students who are behind grade level are known to be at greater risk for dropping out of school; they are also less likely to take and/or pass the Regents. Since ELLs are disproportionately behind grade level, they are also at a disproportionately greater risk for dropping out of school and experiencing academic failure. This fact has long been understood by the NYC BOE. The BOE has found that *"students who drop out of high school are more likely to*

be over age by the time they get to high school."[39] The Board further states that *"[t]hese findings – that the majority of dropouts are over age for grade at the time of entry into high school and drop out principally in 9th or 10th grade – have been replicated repeatedly."*[40] For example, 80.2% of the students in the Class of 2001 who graduated were the expected age for grade when they entered 9th Grade. In addition, 60% of the students who dropped out were over age for grade when they entered 9th grade.[41]

ELLs comprised nearly 15% (9,942) of the 67,072 students in the Class of 2000. ELLs were substantially less likely to be on grade than the overall cohort (which includes ELLs).[42] For example, only 43% of the ELLs were on grade level in contrast with 60% of the overall cohort. Not surprisingly then, ELLs in the Class of 2000 were less likely than all students in the cohort to take the Regents English Examination after 4 years of high school (17.4% vs. 31.2%).[43] As noted earlier, ELLs were more likely to have dropped out of school by this point; they were also less likely to take the ELA Examination.[44]

ELLs who are over age for grade are among those who are most negatively impacted by the Regents requirements and most in need of additional services to achieve the high standards. Thus, a substantial proportion of the ELLs who are still enrolled in school can be expected to drop out unless appropriate support services are immediately implemented. School failure for these young students can and should be prevented. Much more focus on poorly performing middle schools is clearly needed. Teachers in middle school need much more professional

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[39] Flash Research Report #5, NYC BOE Division of Assessment & Accountability, March 1, 2001, p.1.
[40] Id. at 3.
[41] The Class of 2001 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 2000-01 Event Dropout Rates, March, 2002. NYC BOE, Division of Assessment and Accountability. (p.11).
[42] NYC BOE. November 29, 2001. Making Language Matter: Toward a Research Agenda on English Language Learners (ELLs) and the English Regents Examination. Class of 2000 Cohort: English Regents Analysis.
[43] NYC BOE. November 29, 2001. Making Language Matter: Toward a Research Agenda on English Language Learners (ELLs) and the English Regents Examination. Class of 2000 Cohort: English Regents Analysis.
[44] There currently are no corresponding statistics for the Class of 2001.

development, but budget cuts have reduced rather than expanded this critical training. For ELLs, the needs of late arriving students, particularly those with an interrupted formal education in their native country, must be addressed by providing a longer school day, weekend classes and year round programs. These students need to not only become proficient in English, but must also catch-up in all other core subjects. Without more time for instruction, they will end up as over-age students in high schools, behind in credits, and clearly at risk of dropping out or being pushed into GED programs.

C. ELLs are Most at Risk for Not Becoming English Proficient in Middle and High School

Data presented in the ELL Subcommittee Research Report[45] indicates that bilingual and ESL programs have had a very positive educational outcome for many ELLs, and that the most positive findings were for ELLs who entered our school system at an early age (kindergarten and first grade). The data indicates, for example, that 62% of the kindergarten cohort and 51.5% of the grade 1 cohort reached the program exit criterion in three years. This is good news, especially since approximately 76% of ELLs enter our public schools at this level.[46]

The success rate in exiting bilingual/ESL programs for junior high school students and high school students is much more problematic. According to data in the ELL Subcommittee Research Report, 55% of the ELLs who entered the public schools in the middle school grades and 85% of those who entered in high school never reached the exit criteria. The corresponding exit rates for students who entered in elementary school, although substantially lower, are also disturbing: 17.5% of the kindergarten cohort, 23% of the Grade 1 cohort, 24% of the Grade 2 cohort, and 28% of the Grade 3 cohort.[47] Many of the ELLs who are not exiting are ELLs who are in special education and students who have been inconsistently or inappropriately served.

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[45] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE, September 2000.
[46] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000 (p.3).
[47] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000 (Appendix B).

Findings such as these are disturbing because the inability to reach exit criteria from bilingual or ESL programs is linked with higher dropout rates and poorer academic performance.[48]

- A comparison between students in the Grade 6 cohort who reached the exit criteria and their peers who failed to reach the exit criteria is bleak: Only 24% of the students who failed to reach the exit criteria graduated from high school in contrast with 77% of those who exited the programs.
- Only 1 in 7 students who entered the NYC public schools in Grade 9 reached the exit criteria (LAB score) before leaving high school. Consequently, the Board to Education concluded that: "*Meeting the educational needs of ELL students is a challenge for our schools. Many must take extra non-credit English-as-a-second-language courses each term to boost their English language proficiency.*"[49]

D. Summary and Discussion

This section of the report discussed three major factors that are placing ELLs at an increased risk for dropping out of school. They are disproportionately behind academically upon entry into high school; they are disproportionately over age for grade; and many at-risk ELLs have not become proficient in English. This data portrays the greater than ever challenge for students who are graduating this year to meet the graduation requirements. As noted above, preliminary data on the Grade 8 ELA Assessment suggests that ELLs continue to be at risk of academic failure and that many are unlikely to meet the higher standards unless appropriate support services are immediately implemented. BOE data also indicate that since ELLs are disproportionately behind grade level, they are also at disproportionately greater risk for dropping out of school and experiencing academic failure. Finally, the exit rates from

[48] Students who entered the NYC public school later are less likely to exit bilingual/ESL programs. Less than 15% of students who entered in grade 9 exited during high school. Less than 50% who entered in grade 6 exited after 6 years. ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000.
[49] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000 (p.16).

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bilingual/ESL programs for junior high school students and high school students remain grim. The academic achievement data for late arriving ELLs who first enrolled in NYC schools from sixth to ninth grade indicates that they are at especially high risk of failure. Improvements in ESL instruction—including hiring more certified ESL and bilingual teachers and developing curriculum relating ESL instruction and ELA standards-- and an extended day, weekend and summer classes are needed to help these students become proficient in English and master all other core subjects.

Part V

Issues Related to Student Support Services

A. Promised Improvements for Services to ELLs Have Not Materialized

In adopting the new graduation requirements, the Board of Regents recognized that significant improvements and enhancements in the education provided to ELLs and all students were needed. School districts were required to provide additional services for all students at risk of not meeting the new standards, and the Regents also adopted a 12 Step Action Plan specifically designed to assist ELLs to meet the graduation requirements. This section assesses the implementation of the promised improvements to the education of ELLs.

B. Support Services are Inadequate

The data presented on the increased risk of failure which ELLs attending NYC schools face daily explains clearly a need for support services and resources to enable them to succeed in school. The revised promotion policy recognizes the importance of early identification, a comprehensive and expanded program of student support services, and effective interventions to address the educational needs of students at risk of failure:[50] *"The success of the promotion policy hinges on early identification of "at risk" students and the quality of instructional "interventions" and support services provided to them."*[51] The new requirements for high school graduation also include a mandate for schools to provide continued support and instruction in day, evening, and summer school.[52].

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[50] *"The delivery of a comprehensive, coordinated, and expanded program of student support services is vital to the total educational experience of students as they work toward meeting high promotion standards... The Pupil Personnel Team in each school will be organized so that appropriate staff provide the supports necessary for all students to reach the higher standards, particularly those at risk of retention."* CR A-501 Section 2 (p.5).

[51] NYC BOE, Promotion Policy Instructional Report, May 17, 2000 (p.1).

[52] *"Students who fail to meet high school graduation requirements may receive continued support and instruction in day, evening, and summer school through the end of the school year in which their twenty-first birthday occurs."* CR A-501, Section 7.8.

The BOE has recognized in its research that ELLs may require additional support to meet the higher Regents requirements for graduation: *"The major implication of Study 5... is that (1) ELLs may require some accommodations such as extended time and/or expanded after-school and Saturday tutorials to meet the new Regents English requirements for graduation."*[53] It also reported: *"The Board should also offer expanded summer school and after school opportunities."*[54]

The New York State Education Department policies also recommend improved and expanded services for ELLs to enable them to meet new standards. For example, the Regents developed a Twelve Step Action plan that would ensure a range of necessary supports for ELLs to meet the new standards. The plan's recommendations include: additional English language instruction; a significant expansion of professional development activities; ensuring the certification of bilingual and ESL teachers; ensuring equity in technology and resources; and providing extended day, weekend and summer classes. The following section describes some of our major concerns about the inadequacy of support services for ELLs who continue to be at risk of dropping out of school.

C. Inadequate Implementation of The Regents' 12-Step Action Plan

To enable ELLs to experience school success, the Regents implemented a 12-Step Action Plan. The 12 steps are:

1. Set clear goals and provide instruction.
2. Provide intensive English language instruction to LEP students.
3. Support an extended school day and year.
4. Initiate Project English Jump Start.

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[53] ELL Subcommittee Report, NYC BOE September 2000 (p.3).
[54] Chancellor's Report on the Education of English Language Learners, NYC BOE, December 2000 (p.ii).

5. Provide Professional Development.
6. Encourage certified teachers to teach LEP students.
7. Communicate effectively with parents.
8. Ensure equity in technology ad instructional resources.
9. Improve identification and assessment.
10. Require specifications for improving local accountability.
11. Support the development of model programs.
12. Improve reporting and collection of LEP achievement data.

Unfortunately, this plan has not been implemented properly in NYC and as a result, ELLs have not been provided with the preparation they need to experience school success. A 2000 monitoring report from SED of school compliance to provide increased English language instruction to help ELL students meet the new standards found that nearly half of the monitored schools were out of compliance. Furthermore, even schools that were providing increased ESL instruction were using uncertified and untrained ESL teachers.

Although ELLs were supposed to receive supplemental English language assistance as part of the New York State Regents 12-step action plan, the level of assistance outlined has not yet occurred. One fact is clear: ELLs are going to have great difficulty meeting the new requirements without the availability of additional resources and support services. The ESL classes that ELLs are required to take to learn English are substantially different from the English Language Arts (ELA) classes which are taken by English proficient students. Only those ELLs who are at the advanced and transitional levels of English language proficiency receive some ELA instruction. Thus, ELLs do not receive the same standard of instruction as English proficient students. In other words, most ELLs receive neither the instruction nor the resources to

enable them to meet the higher standards for graduation.

In addition, the 12 Step Action Plan recognized the need for ELLs to be taught by certified and trained teachers. However, little or no progress has been made in increasing the number of certified ESL or bilingual teachers. 59% of ESL and bilingual teachers in NYC are uncertified or are approaching retirement age- the largest shortage of all teachers in NYC. The BOE estimates that 3600 new bilingual and ESL teachers are needed over the next three years. ESL is too often taught by teachers without any training in how to assist ELLs to learn English and meet the ELA standards.

Another key component of the 12 Step Plan required schools to provide an extended school day and year: no new funding was provided to school districts to provide an extended school day or school year for ELLs. Some schools are using federal or state funding to provide these programs, but many schools are not For example, the State Education department is able to fund only one in five requests for extended day programs. In addition, ELL students in summer school often did not receive appropriate ESL or bilingual instruction and due to budget cuts, Saturday ESL classes were eliminated this year. Until ELLs receive the additional help they were promised, it is unfair and educationally unsound to require them to pass the English Regents exam.

D. The Overall Quality of Schooling for ELLs is Poor

In February 2001, Advocates for Children of New York (AFC) and the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) jointly issued a report documenting the major challenges facing schools regarding services to ELLs.[55] Among other issues, the report discusses:

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[55] *Report from the Front Lines: What's Needed to Make New York's ESL and Bilingual Programs Succeed.* Available from Advocates for Children and/or the New York Immigration Coalition.

- Issues related to teacher quality, training, and professional development. For example, there is a dearth of teachers in NYC, especially for bilingual or ESL teachers, so that ELLs are often taught by teachers who are uncertified, and there is a lack of professional development around ELL issues.
- Issues related to the curriculum and student assessment. For example, there is no established ESL curriculum to prepare children to meet the new standards. Many ELL students are not provided the same language arts curriculum that English proficient students take before the English Regents.
- Issues related to student support services. For example, students who need additional support services do not always receive them.

In *Report from the Front Lines: What's Needed to Make New York's ESL and Bilingual Programs Succeed* released in February 2001, the NYIC and AFC surveyed 227 teachers from across the city and found disturbing patterns. Thirty five percent of bilingual teachers stated that they speak the same language of only *"some"* of their students, meaning many students are being taught in a language they do not understand. Over 61% of teachers indicated that proper services for ELLs are not always available. Thirty six percent of teachers indicated that their curriculum materials are not adequate to help students meet the new standards. Forty six percent of bilingual/ESL teachers said that they did not receive professional development to help deal with challenges presented by ELLs. Furthermore, overwhelming percentages of teachers stated that language barriers with parents of limited English proficiency were a problem and translation and interpretation services for parents were needed.

During our focus groups with students, some participants described the lack of intervention from their schools when they had started cutting classes after becoming very

discouraged. Some reported that this led them through a downward spiral of missing more school, falling further behind in their classes, and finally dropping out.

- *"Honestly, I took advantage of the fact that other students were coming in and out of the school and nobody was noticing. I joined them and after a while I was cutting every day. Nobody tried to intervene. Nobody cared."* [Female, 17]
- *"I started hanging out with the older crowd, mostly for safety reasons. I stopped going to school all together. Only one teacher called me, but most didn't care."* [Male, 19]
- *"I started cutting one class, the one where the teacher really got angry because I didn't speak English. Since nobody called or said anything I started cutting other classes."* [Female, 19]
- *"Here, if I am absent one day, the teacher is calling my house. She speaks to me and to my mother. In my high school, the only calls were from machines."* [Male, 18]

E. Translation and Interpretation Services are Inadequate

There is a lack of translation and interpretation services for parents in the NYC public schools. This, in turn, impedes parental involvement in their children's education and in school governance activities that help determine how the needs of ELL students are met. As the BOE's recent Parent Survey shows, the need for translation and interpretation services for parents is great.[56] Based on the survey, 31% of parents stated that they do not receive interpretation services at meetings even though they need them. Overall, 18% of parents said they do not receive report cards in their language, and 19% do not receive other written school-related materials in a language they understand. Furthermore, a disturbing 64% of parents of ELLs are not fully aware of how their child's placement in bilingual or ESL programs was determined. In addition, in surveys of teachers and parents that AFC conducted with the NYIC during the last two years, lack of translation and interpretation services for parents who don't speak English was identified as an overwhelming problem. The BOE did pass a resolution requiring language

[56] NYC BOE Parent Survey conducted in Spring 2001.

access and interpretation in October 2001, but as of this publication this general resolution has not been codified in implementing regulations and no progress has been made in this area.

During our focus groups with students, participants stated that the lack of communication between the school and their parent(s) was an important factor in their disconnection from school. Participants felt that if their school had done a better job of reaching out to parents, that it might have encouraged them to stay in school. Some students indicated that there was limited communication, but compounded by negative comments, which furthered their sense of alienation from school.

- *"School never calls your family to let them know how you are doing. So your family thinks you're okay. They have no idea until something happens."* [Female, 20]
- *"Once a year is not enough for parents to know how we are really doing in school."* [Male, 19]
- *"School only calls your parents when something bad happens like you're in trouble or you're cutting class."* [Female, 20]
- *"If the counselors called our parents and told them what we needed to do to finish school or what kind of help we needed, believe me our parents would make us do it. But since they don't know, by the time they find out it's usually too late."* [Male, 19]
- *"Our parents depend on the school to contact them, but the school doesn't call. There's no communication, no interest on the part of the school to contact our parents."* [Male, 19]

F. Title 1 Services are Rarely Provided

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the largest source of federal funding for public schools and for ELLs in the nation. In passing Title I, Congress recognized that "educational needs are particularly great for...children with limited English proficiency...." 20 U.S.C.S. §1111(b)(3). Consequently, Title I requires its services and programs to specifically and affirmatively address the needs of ELLs. However, research has shown that these

requirements are not properly implemented at the ground level, including in New York, and state and local Title I plans typically do not include ELLs in their service plans and accountability systems.[57] In other words, school districts commonly do not provide any details in their Title I plans for serving ELLs in violation of Title I requirements.

In addition, parents, students, and communities are provided very little recourse to address inadequacies and noncompliance of Title I services and programs in their schools and districts. The complaint process[58] for alleging violations of Title I requirements is weakly enforced and implemented at the local, state, and federal levels. Extremely few communities, particularly ELL communities, are aware of the availability of this process. ELLs, therefore, have been disproportionately underserved under Title I programs and services despite clear mandates for such services to be specifically designed to meet ELL needs. With NYC receiving an estimated $200 million additional Title 1 funding beginning in the fall of 2002, ensuring that ELLs receive expanded services through Title 1 is critical.

G. Summary and Discussion

This section of the report has documented that the promised improvement to the education that were mandated by the Board of Regents to enable ELLs to meet the new standards have not been implemented. The school system has failed to provide extended day programs, has failed to provide additional ESL classes taught by certified teachers, and has failed to provide teachers who have been trained to assist at-risk students meet the new, higher standards. Nonetheless, ELLs (including those who are recent arrivals to the United States) are held to the same high standards without the benefit of adequate instruction and support services. Furthermore, the public schools' failure to provide important school related information in ELL

[57] *Title I in Midstream: The Fight to Improve Schools for Poor Kids*, Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, Summer 1999.
[58] 34 C.F.R. §299.10.

parents' native languages prevents these parents from playing an active role in their children's education.

Part VI

Conclusions

The educational outcome data for ELLs indicates that though some ELLs are succeeding under the new standards, too many are dropping out or being pushed out of high school. Based on the fact that middle schools are doing a poor job in preparing current ELLs to meet both ELA and math standards, there is a very strong likelihood of even higher drop out rates for ELLs in the future. Furthermore, the improvements and enhancements to the education mandated by the Board of Regents have not been implemented comprehensively, and too many ELLs are being taught by uncertified, under-trained teachers, and are not receiving the additional help they are entitled to and need to succeed.

The data from the BOE and our analysis lays out the factors associated with increased academic risk for ELLs. These factors include: the failure of too many schools to provide additional required English classes or to have trained and certified ESL and bilingual teachers; the lack of an ESL curriculum tied to the new standards; the lack of extended day, weekend and year round programs for late arriving ELLs and other at-risk ELLs; very high levels of dropouts in certain high schools; poor preparation for high school by many middle schools; and a "one size fits all" graduation standard which does not recognize the unique needs of late arriving and over-age ELLs.

The challenge for policymakers is to go beyond a "one size fits all" approach in both setting the standards and in developing strategies to ensure that all children can succeed. Clearly, gaining proficiency in English is critically important for ELLs, and major improvements are needed in the quality of ESL instruction. But focusing only on English proficiency, without

providing an extended school day, weekend and year round classes, will result in ELLs falling behind in other core subjects and not being able to pass required Regents exams in math, science and social studies. Policymakers must also learn from the success stories of ELLs—from the successes of former ELLs and from current ELLs who were able to meet the standards. While many improvements are needed, many schools are doing a very good job in helping ELLs meet the new standards.

The fact that former ELLs have the highest graduation rates and lowest drop out rates of all students in the public school system and the fact that over 30% of ELLs who are not academically proficient in English were still able to meet the ELA requirement and graduate on time, is testament to the fact that many programs are working. Eliminating bilingual education or limiting the time ELLs can receive ESL instruction will jeopardize the positive progress that has been made. A targeted approach based on the needs of the ELLs who are not succeeding now, focused on schools in which ELLs are under-performing is needed. New federal Title I funds and increased state funding provide the resources needed to implement this new approach. Furthermore, reducing the number of students who need six or seven years to complete school, will save the school system millions of dollars that can be invested in further improvements in the school system. The following recommendations provide a blueprint for an agenda to ensure that all ELLs can and will succeed.

Part VII

Recommendations to Increasing Graduation Rates for ELLs

1) Increase school accountability for ensuring that schools succeed: Target middle and high schools in which ELLs are under-performing and implement a "Comstat" approach to improving ELL education.

The NYC BOE must focus on schools failing to educate ELLs properly. They should target all middle and high schools in which ELL educational outcomes are below acceptable levels, provide central board oversight and increase accountability for improvements in educational outcomes for ELLs. It is critical to assist ELLs currently in high schools to meet the standards, but at the same time we need to address the shortcomings of too many middle schools. To pass Regents exams in English and all other core subjects, ELLs must begin high school better prepared. All schools in which ELLs are under-performing must have certified and experienced teachers assigned to them, a longer school day and expanded professional development through an Intensive Summer Teacher Institute.

2) Implement new strategies to assist ELLs most at risk of dropping out—the diverse needs of late-arriving and over-age ELLs must be addressed.

ELLs most at risk in high schools are late-arriving students and over-age ELLs, regardless if schools are high performing or low performing. Different strategies are needed based on their diverse needs. An ELL who enrolls in NYC schools at age 13-16 as a "student with an interrupted formal education" (SIFE), has very different needs than an ELL who arrives at the same age with a strong educational background. For the latter, an accelerated English acquisition program may be appropriate, while for the former, an extended day, weekend and

year round classes using bilingual education combined with ESL instruction may be appropriate. Pushing these students out of high schools is not an acceptable response.

3) Improve ESL instruction.

It is critically important that curriculum be developed that relates ESL instruction to the new standards and teachers be trained to use the new curriculum. There is no benefit to ELLs in sitting in two or three ESL classes per day, if teachers are using the most basic curriculum even for students who have gained intermediate English skills and are ready to incorporate the new core curricular standards. The ESL curriculum must be tied to the English language arts standards for which students are being held accountable. The BOE is currently piloting a new approach to ESL, an accelerated academic English model program. Under this model, well-trained certified teachers provide content rich instruction using ESL and students also receive extended day and weekend instruction to support learning during the regular school day. These programs should be expanded throughout NYC schools.

4) Increase the number of Certified Teachers.

To improve ELL's academic proficiency in English, the BOE must increase the number of certified teachers teaching ESL and bilingual classes. This constitutes one of the longest standing and largest shortage areas in the NYC school system. At least 3,600 teachers are currently needed in this area. The Teachers for Tomorrow program has not addressed the systemic shortage of certified ESL and bilingual teachers, and new approaches including additional pay and other incentives must be put into place.

5) Improve core subject instruction for ELLs.

In addition to passing an ELA Regents, ELLs soon must be able to pass Regents exams in math, science and social studies to graduate. The shortage of certified bilingual teachers in the

core subjects must be remedied or these students will not be able to pass the new Regents exams. Expanded professional development in ESL methodologies for English-only speaking core subject teachers is needed so that ELLs who are not in bilingual classes do not fall behind in core subjects as they become academically proficient in English.

6) Maintain high standards for ELLs, but develop alternative assessments to the ELA Regents requirement for late arrival ELLs.

Late entrant ELLs who meet all core subject requirements, but have not had the time to become academically proficient in English, should not be forced to remain in high school until they can pass an ELA Regents exam designed for native born English speakers who have been studying English language arts since kindergarten. These students should be able to graduate high school with a local diploma by passing an English proficiency test based on the number of years they have been in ESL classes and by demonstrating language arts proficiency in their native language.

7) Implement a comprehensive language access policy for the parents of ELLs.

Research clearly demonstrates that parent involvement in their children's education results in improved educational outcomes. However, for parents of ELLs, the lack of comprehensive policy to translate school documents and provide interpreters for school meetings prevents their active participation in their children's schools. The BOE recently adopted a language access policy but due to the lack of resources, it has not been implemented. Funding is needed to ensure its implementation in all schools. In addition, investing in family literacy and adult ESL classes while their children are attending weekend ESL classes will also enable parents to be more actively engaged in their children's education.

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